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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6240
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STATE FOR SCA/INS, INL/AP (BROWNE) AND IO/T (NEVILLE)

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SUBJECT: INTERVIEW PANEL SELECTS MALAYSIAN CANDIDATE FOR NEXT
COLOMBO PLAN SECRETARY GENERAL

¶1. On Monday, June 11, the Colombo Plan Council Selection Panel, comprised of representatives from Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, and the United States, met to interview candidates for the position of Colombo Plan Secretary General. The four candidates included Ms. Patricia Chia

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from Malaysia, Dr. Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman of Bangladesh, Ambassador Unatu Wangchuk of Bhutan, and Mr. Se-jun Yoon of the Republic of Korea.

¶2. Based on her impressive resume and history of positive working relations with the USG, several State Department Bureaus, including INL, IO, and G/IWI, endorsed Ms. Chia for the Secretary General position prior to the interviews. While each of the candidates had strong qualifications in his or her respective field, the interview process confirmed that Chia was the most qualified candidate to lead the Colombo Plan. In her interview, Chia outlined her priorities for the Colombo Plan, including the recruitment of new donors, revitalization of old donors, the establishment of a public affairs strategy, and the need for improved staffing, funding, and oversight. Ms. Chia named women's issues as an area the Colombo Plan could better address in the future. Chia's name will be formally introduced to the Colombo Plan Council on June 18, and she is expected to assume office after the current Colombo Plan Secretary Kittipan Kanjanapipatkul of Thailand leaves office on July

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¶30.

¶3. COMMENT: Embassy is also favorably impressed with Chia and is confident she has the experience, professionalism, and integrity necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Colombo Plan.

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